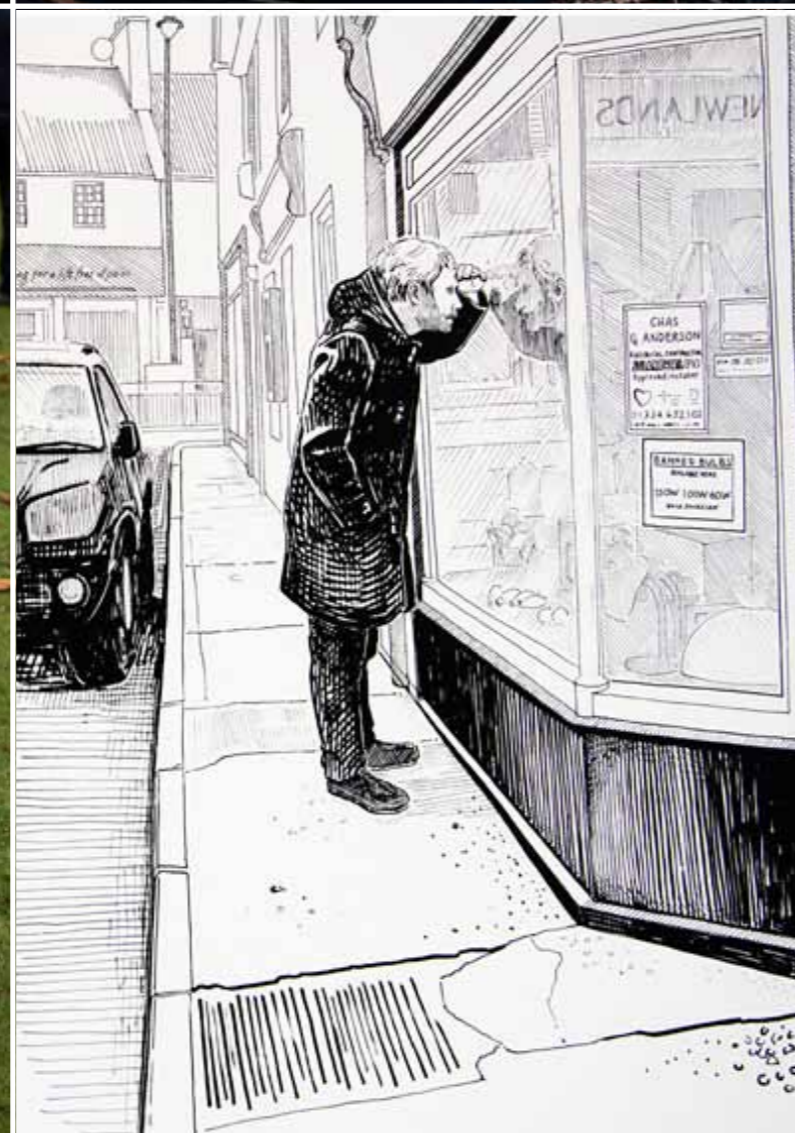


Cupar Arts Festival

2013 Report





Summary

Spanning twelve days in October, Cupar Arts Festival's main programme has a focus on visual art projects which form a trail of artworks and events in unused buildings and interior and exterior spaces in and around Cupar by leading and emerging artists from Scotland and beyond.

This year was the fourth festival, previous editions having taken place in 2008, 2009 and then in 2011. Artworks and events were to be found at a number of historic venues and buildings around the centre of town including churches, county buildings, medieval closes, vacant shops, the park, and railway station. Several locations on the periphery of the town included the local national trust property and grounds, a nearby country estate, and a former grain silo. The main visual arts programme is also complimented by music events, workshops, talks and family events.

Research has shown that people, who are less interested in art and to whom artworks and events can be regarded as just a part of the enjoyable experience of visiting some of those historical buildings and sites, have become interested and engaged with the work they have discovered there, with the festival at the same time providing something of great interest conceptually and intellectually for visual arts audiences from Fife and beyond. Cupar Arts is supported by a broad range of local partners which help to make this possible.

Cupar Arts recorded recorded audiences of approximately 12,000 in 2013, continuing to build upon previous events (10,000 approx. in 2011). Audience research demonstrates that the public profile and appreciation of the festival continues to improve nationally year upon year with increased awareness benefitting the participating artists, the local economy and perception of the town. In 2013, many people stated that they still could not believe that 'something of this calibre' was taking place in Cupar, with others saying that they thought it was a fantastic event for Fife and for raising awareness of and engagement with the arts in Scotland.

"This year over forty individuals and groups have come to the historic Fife market town, which has a long judicial and agricultural history. Their purpose is to engage their audience through participative and site-specific artworks, interventions, happenings, events, displays, actions and installations. Many of these diverse works address their audience, the townsfolk of Cupar and large numbers of visitors, drawn by the sheer quality of what is on offer, directly in places where art is not normally part of the pattern of everyday life."

Giles Sutherland. The Times



Programme

A man dressed as a pig and sought out by townspeople and festival visitors, historic buildings flooded with video projections of people being immersed in water, beautifully detailed drawings of mythological creatures lurking on the walls of medieval closes, and handwriting cut into the grass in the town's park. These were just some of the exciting artworks and performative visual art events which were developed in response to the theme of "fate", which underpinned the 2013 Cupar Arts Festival programme. Now in its fourth year, the biannual festival programme is developed from an international call for project submissions along with invited guest artists, as well as including a host of musicians, poets and an educational programme.

Some project highlights included:

Anthony Schrag

In the weeks prior to the festival, Anthony Schrag ran a number of workshops in the town with the local Scout group, schoolchildren and youth groups. Discussions also took place with people involved in preserving Cupar's heritage, the police, and those working in the legal sector. Talks and activities all centred around one key issue: After centuries as a judicial town, what did it mean for Cupar to be losing its Sherriff Court next year? Anthony's time in Cupar culminated in an event, 'Pigheaded Cupar Justice' (the title taken from an old Scots saying referencing Cupar pigheadedness), which involved a presentation at the festival hub on the second Sunday of the festival, followed by an exhilarating hide and seek event around the town's streets. Anthony was finally captured by a group of local children, who, after throwing him in the river for good measure, took part in a discussion event about justice and fairness.

Pernille Spence

For the 2013 Cupar Arts Festival, guest artist Pernille Spence developed an installation in the town's historic Corn Exchange building, which incorporated a performance based on personal accounts, texts and poetry from those who have experienced the loss of freedom and influence over their own fate through circumstances beyond their control. The performance was repeated continuously throughout both weekends of the festival. Restrictions were placed on the performer causing the pace of the performance to change as exhaustion set in, with visitors led blindfolded to the room where the performance took place, before festival volunteers removed their masks. Pernille's work often explores a visual dialogue between the human body, movement and space and the body's physical/psychological limits and constraints within these parameters.

Jenny Smith

Jenny Smith's site specific work, "What is the most important decision you have made?" was developed through a series of workshops with children at Cupar's Castlehill Primary School. Collecting their written replies to the question in order to form the basis of the work, she created a large-scale wooden stencil of the children's handwriting which was then used to cut a text-based artwork into the grass in the local park, an undertaking which the children were involved in. Photographs and sections of the stencil were then used to make displays in the windows of two local shops. The artwork can still be viewed in the park for the time being.

Jacqueline Bulnes & PierGiuseppe DiTanno with Panini 2 Life

This group of visiting artists from Italy created a series of evocative and memorable performances at the town's railway station. With captivating storytelling through dance and movement, accompanied by a haunting soundtrack, the four performers captured the imagination of festival visitors, passengers and the local community with many people caught by surprise as they arrived at the station or disembarked from a train to find the platforms and waiting areas transformed.



From a recent survey, where respondents were asked what they had most enjoyed and why, and from comments sent to us via Facebook or written in Comments Books:

- *The listening to plants by Ailie Rutherford in the laundry building at Hill of Tarvit. The wind sculptures at Hill of Tarvit and the murals in the close. The Robots by Bob Moyler in the Crossgate. All 4 very visual and fun and they all seemed to get interest from passers by.*
- *Wounded Knee pop up song shop; Gayle Nelson thought provoking and moving; planetarium brilliant for children!*
- *Corn exchange - Prisoners of conscience. the process was ongoing, meaningful and creative. Art with a political conscience. Music evenings in the hub - entertaining, social evenings. The fisherman - traditional art but with an interesting back story The street performances - great fun and took the festival out into the streets.*
- *Artwork that brightened up the town and brought it to life.*
- *Carolyn Scott's photography in the olds jail cells - the setting was perfect for the work, which was fascinating itself, and I was very glad to get to see a part of the town which I never knew existed in all the years I lived there, shortly before it was to disappear for good. Withered Hand and Jo Foster - this gig was the main reason I came back for the day, WH is one of my very favourites.*
- *YMCA exhibits were great (100 golden eggs), and the cells at county buildings, alien was spooky, wall murals around town were fantastic.*
- *The video at the Adamson. Love finding art in public places. Brilliant!*
- *Kirsty Whiten = love, and love that they will remain, for a while hopefully anyway. Anthony Schrag - interactive, showing up small mindedness (pigheadedness)? if I understood it right?! that can only be a good thing. alan bond = amazing! beautiful and just really liked it.*
- *I liked the works in the silo a lot - I thought the spaces were very interesting (I hadn't visited before) and liked the way both artists had responded to the space. There was a good atmosphere too.*
- *The performance on the railway platform - so different and fun too!*
- *The Bonnygate Bakery!*
- *Took my little ones on the train this morning and caught the performance art at the station - don't know quite how I will explain why there are no dancers next time we go.*



The programme consisted of forty-one visual art projects (some of which involved temporary performances and events), eight music events, thirteen workshops and a large number of events within the overall framework (e.g. part of artists' projects and workshops programme) which were suitable for families and children.

A festival pop-up cafe, 'The Bonnygate Bakery' which presented music and poetry, was open on both weekends of the festival, and our festival hub, Castlehill Hall was open each day with a programme of music and performance events over a number of evenings.

Invited Guest Artists

Anthony Schrag Pernille Spence

Participating Artists

Emma Ainsley Ruth Aitken Colin Andrews Jonathan Baxter Kenny Bean Alan Bond
Jacqueline Bulnes & PierGiuseppe DiTanno with Panini 2 Life Irene Blair Morgan Cahn
Tara Chaloner Wen-Li Chen Sandra Collins & Matthew Hawkins Caroline Dear Joanna
Foster Takaya Fujii David Fyans Sarah Gittins Trevor Gordon Holly Keasey
Lesley Kamel Rosie Lesso Katie Lowery Eilidh Mackay Tracy Mackenna & Edwin
Janssen Bob Moyler Liz Murray Gayle Nelson Alison Philp Derek Robertson, Deirdre
Robertson Ailie Rutherford Carolyn Scott Liz Skulina Jenny Smith Karen Spy
Matthias Strahm Tam Treanor Kathy Watts Kirsty Whiten Wounded Knee

Musicians, Poets, Performers

Withered Hand Kid Canaveral Found Jo Foster Wounded Knee The David Latto Band
The Coaltown Daisies Seven Sons William Watts The Strangers Almanac Platform
Poetry Milton Balgoni Claudia Daventry Mark Thomson Robin Cairns
Kevin Cadwallender Tidy Carnage Alison Grace Sarah Banjo Mark Spalding





Audience Development

Research this year, gathered from ticket sales, our website, festival hub, and visitor survey suggests that Cupar Arts Festival continues to attract new audiences. Many visitors in 2013 attended for the first time, whilst at the same time we continue to retain a strong core audience who have visited in previous years. The festival continues to help audiences to discover new artists, and to enjoy visual art, music and performance events in a range of unusual and interesting contexts.

The festival programme contained more event-based and participatory projects in 2013, and more temporary public artworks. There was less emphasis on larger indoor buildings hosting static artworks (as in 2011). Such projects, which brought the festival very much out into the public realm, often attracted passers by and created dialogue. A trail of alien artefacts hidden in the shop windows of the town, public service robots on the streets, performers at the railway station, and a planetarium in the town square were amongst just some of the events and artworks which engaged and intrigued families, festival-goers and passers by alike.

Music and performance events at the festival hub (Castlehill Hall), and other venues in the town attracted different audiences again, including those primarily interested in music, along with festival artists, and members of the local community, many of whom took advantage of the opportunity to learn more about what the wider festival had to offer through attending those events.

In 2013, we presented our most extensive programme of workshops and family events to date, funded by The Robertson Trust. This included a series of creative workshops which offered a wide range of activities from clay animation to dance. As well as the workshops which could be enjoyed during the festival, several of our artists also ran workshops in local schools and with community groups as part of their commissioned projects. Our research shows that workshops run in schools and with local groups in particular are a very effective way of raising awareness amongst local families.





Marketing and Media

The public and media profile of Cupar Arts Festival has continued to increase significantly, as the festival has established a clearer identity and a better understanding of its audiences.

In 2013, Cupar Arts raised awareness of the festival in the following ways:

- Cupar Arts Festival digital newsletters
- Website
- Social Media
- Word of Mouth
- Weekly column in local newspaper
- Regular features in the local press in the lead up to and during the event.
- Extensive festival pull out supplement in local newspaper one week prior to event.
- Advertisements and features in national press
- Radio and television interviews
- Workshops featuring festival artists in local schools and with other community groups in the run up to the event.
- Advance distribution of festival flyers (4 months prior), guidebooks (2 months prior) and maps (1 month prior).
- Festival stall at local Farmers Market

Audience feedback showed that all of this was very effective in raising awareness of the event. In the lead in to the festival, the Cupar Arts website, which has received very positive feedback this year from both participating artists and festival visitors, registered 614 hits on the day of the festival launch alone (source: Google Analytics), and the number of Likes on the Cupar Arts Facebook increased by approximately 200 (from 250 to 446).

A recent survey showed that people heard about the event in the following ways:
 Word of mouth: 65% | Cupar Arts Mailing List: 30% | Website: 7% | Social Media: 11%
 Marketing Materials (guidebooks, maps, flyers, posters): 11% | Magazine and Newspaper ads/features: 7%

This indicates that there is a good build up to the festival amongst those interested in the arts and the local community, people are talking about it and remember it from previous years. Feedback from local groups and schools regarding children and young people's involvement with artists' projects has also been excellent and this was very effective in raising awareness amongst the local community.

Marketing Materials:

This year the festival produced the following in terms of print marketing materials:
 • Guidebook (6,000 copies) • Map (6,000 copies) • Posters (100) • Flyers (1000)

A concerted effort had been made this year to improve on marketing materials, in particular the layout of the festival guidebook and our festival map. Audience feedback was overwhelmingly positive for our marketing materials this year, with the guidebook and map praised for their page design and clarity of information.

Mapping and Signage:

The festival received funding to produce a bespoke map which highlighted the locations of artworks and events across Cupar, many in historic buildings and at sites important to the town's heritage e.g. medieval closes and wynds, county buildings, national trust property, churches.



Artists' projects and events were issued with a numbered spot which matched the colour coding and numbering on this map and also in the guidebook, and which were displayed on or near the artwork or at the venue. Artists were also encouraged to adapt signage according to their own site or venue if required. AA signs were erected on all approach roads to Cupar along with two in town pointing visitors to the festival hub.

The website also incorporated an interactive map which contained the same information and was similar in appearance to the print map. Clicking on a numbered spot would provide further information about a project along with directions. The festival's website is adaptable for easy use on Smartphones. Larger red spots and sandwich boards were also used to draw attention to events and exhibitions at certain buildings including the festival hub, YMCA, County Buildings, and the silo.

Response to the increased attention to mapping this year has largely been very positive indeed. There has been a marked reduction in the number of people saying that they 'could not find things' (although this does still occur in an event of this nature). In a recent survey results showed that:

85 % of people were able to locate artworks and events around the town with either no issues at all, or only one or two minor issues.

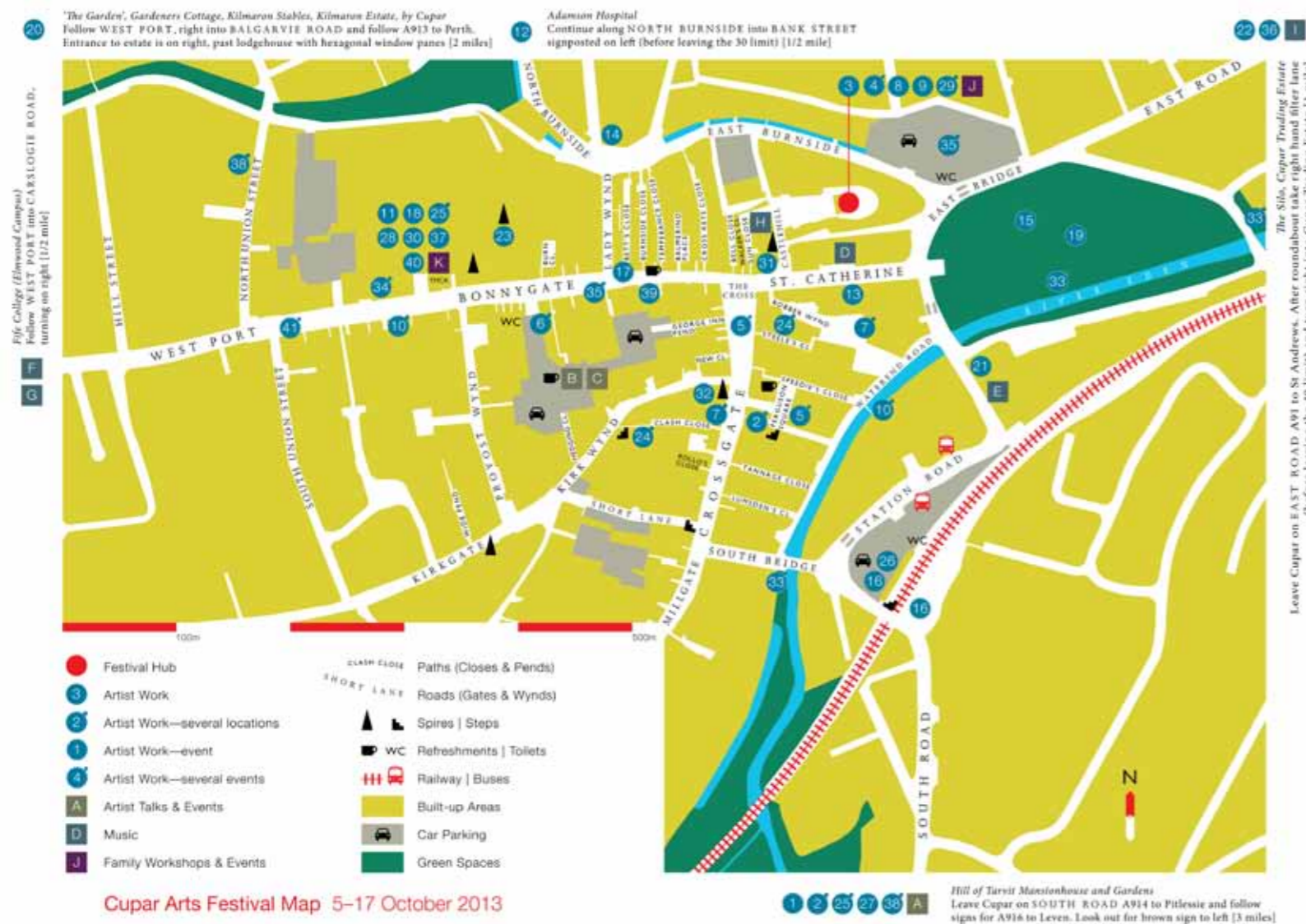
11.5 % were able to locate artworks and events, although had difficulty finding quite a few things.

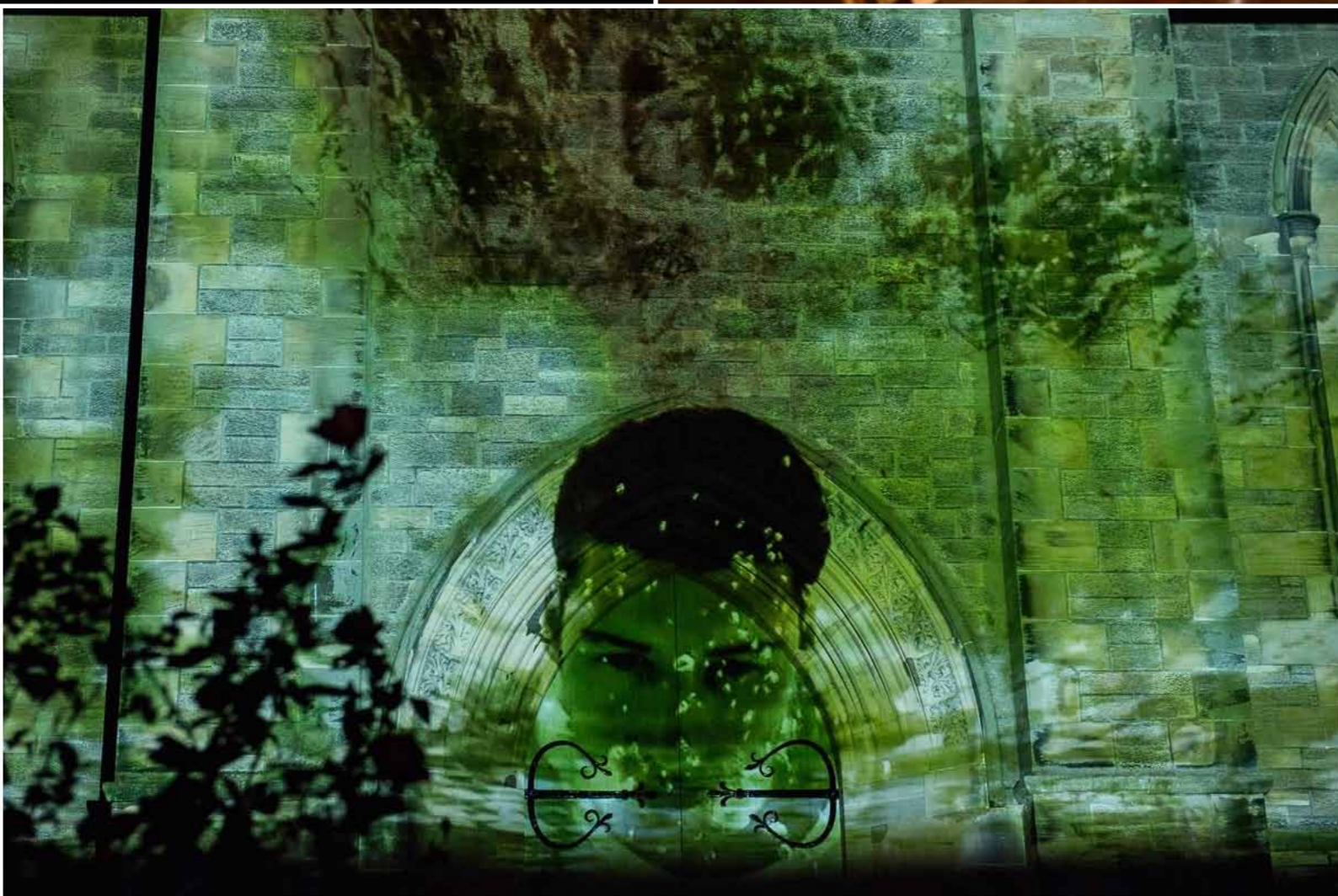
3.5 % said that they found it very difficult to find things.

In an effort to avoid adding to the amount of "visual clutter" in the town (currently there are already many banners hanging from Cupar's railway station railings for instance), and also mindful of that fact that the event is about discovering things by seeking them out, the festival no longer uses banners. The lack of highly visible festival signage around the town, however, seemed to be an area which received the most negative feedback, specifically amongst members of the local community, and is something which Cupar Arts could take forward.

Radio, television and press:

Cupar Arts hired a publicist for the first time in 2013 which resulted in features in the national press and on radio and television including interviews on BBC Radio Scotland's The Culture Studio with Janice Forsyth and MacAulay & Co and STV News. A substantial review in The Times by journalist Giles Sutherland reached a large audience as did inclusion in a VisitScotland advertising campaign which was featured in The Herald, Scotland on Sunday and The Sunday Post. In our publicist's report, opportunities to see from PR coverage (combined circulation) was 77,429,287.





Supporters

Cupar Arts received generous funding from Creative Scotland and Strategic Events Fife this year which contributed largely towards our artists' fees and expenses and our marketing budget. Funding was also received from Fife Council's Culture and Heritage Investment Fund towards the production of our festival map and from Hope Scott Trust for our programme guidebook. Funding for our interactive map and assistance with our digital development was made possible thanks to a grant from AmbITion Scotland. The Robertson Trust funded all of our workshops and family events, whilst we received awards from Cupar Common Good Fund and Fife Council Area Budget towards events at our festival hub and projects which directly involved the local community, along with sponsorship from our local business association towards the presentation of music events.

We continue to receive generous support and sponsorship in 2013 from a growing number of community partners, organisations and institutions including Scotrail, National Trust Scotland, NHS Fife, Fife schools and local businesses.

In-kind support comes from the many individuals who donate their time and expertise to this event and we would like to express our gratitude to all who volunteered with us this year in order to support the delivery of the event and specific projects.



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